

## Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 EUR-12 SMS-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00  
INRE-00 ICAE-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03  
NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05 MCE-00 OMB-01  
TRSE-00 ACDA-12 SAA-01 SES-02 /082 W  
-----107456 161529Z /53

O 161430Z AUG 78  
FM AMEMBASSY SANA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5708  
INFO SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE  
/CHUSMTM DHAHRAN  
USMTM RIYADH  
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 SANA 4054

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: MASS, SA, YE  
SUBJ: NO TURN TO THE SOVIETS

SUMMARY: ACCORDING TO SAUDI ENVOY, YAR PRESIDENT SALIH  
HAS ONCE AGAIN REJECTED SOVIET OFFER OF IMMEDIATE AND MASSIVE  
ARMS DELIVERIES. BREAK-DOWN OF TALKS WITH US WAS "MISUNDER-  
STANDING" WHICH SALIH WANTS CLEAR AWAY IN ORDER TO START  
AGAIN. END SUMMARY.

1. ALI MUSALLIM, SAUDI ENVOY FROM OFFICE OF PRINCE SULTAN,  
CALLED ON CHARGE AND EMBOFF ENGLEHART IN EMBASSY 16 AUGUST  
AFTER SETTING UP APPOINTMENT BY RAMADAN TELECON LAST NIGHT  
AT TWO A.M. TO CHARGE'S HOME.

2. MUSALLIM SAID HE HAD TWICE POSTPONED HIS RETURN TO SAUDI  
ARABIA TO MAKE SURE HE UNDERSTOOD REASONS FOR FAILURE OF ARMS  
TALKS LAST WEEK AND TO HAMMER OUT PLAN TO GET SAUDI, U.S.,  
YEMENI ARMS COOPERATION BACK ON TRACK.

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3. CHARGE NOTED THAT YAR PRESIDENT HAD RECEIVED  
SOVIET CHARGE D'AFFAIRES AXENENOK. MUSALLIM SAID,  
YES, NEWS OF FAILURE OF US/SAUDI MISSION HAD QUICKLY  
LEAKED OUT AND SOVIETS HAD CLAMMERED TO YAR PRESIDENT  
FOR INTERVIEW. SALIH AGREED AND AXENENOK TOLD HIM THAT  
SQUADRON OF MIG 21'S COULD BE DELIVERED WITHIN TWO

WEEKS, NEW TANKS COULD COME IN IN SAME PERIOD, SOME ROCKETS YEMENIS SOUGHT COULD ALSO BE DELIVERED AT ONCE. RADAR AND OTHER EQUIPMENT DESIRED BY YEMENIS WOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE QUICKLY AND THIS IMPACT PACKAGE WOULD BE TIED TO FURTHER STEPS TO BE TAKEN IN MID-TERM.

4. SALIH REFUSED.

5. MUSALLIM CLAIMS THAT SALIH DOES NOT SEE EVENTS OF LAST WEEK AS YEMENI "REJECTION" OF US/SAUDI OFFER. THAT IS "MISUNDERSTANDING" LIKE YEMENI VIEW THAT U.S. NOW REFUSING TO CONSIDER ANY FURTHER EQUIPMENT REQUESTS BEYOND IMPACT PACKAGE.

6. CHARGE TOLD MUSALLIM THAT IN TALK WITH YAR PRIME MINISTER TWO DAYS BEFORE, MESSAGE HAD BEEN SENT TO SALIH TO REASSURE HIM OF U.S. DESIRE TO CONTINUE TO TALK AND BEGIN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE WITH EXPANDED PROGRAM OF ARMS COOPERATION. CHARGE COMMENTED THAT IF SALIH POSITION WAS AS DESCRIBED IT WAS BASICALLY SAME AS U.S. POSITION IN TALKS PREVIOUS WEEKEND. WAS YEMENI REJECTION WHAT IT SEEMED TO BE, OR A MISUNDERSTANDING OR A MISTAKE?

7. MUSALLIM SAID IT WAS PARTLY A MISUNDERSTANDING AND PARTLY A "YEMENI" MISTAKE. CHARGE NOTED THAT IF IT WAS A MIS-SECRET

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UNDERSTANDING IT WAS ONE THAT ALL SAUDI MEMBERS SHARED ALONG WITH AMERICANS WHO WERE LISTENING TO CONVERSATION BUT IF SALIH WAS NOT WED TO EXAGGERATED IDEAS OF U.S. FINANCIAL AID AND BILATERAL MILITARY DELIVERIES, THEN THERE WAS BASIS TO PROCEED. MUSALLIM INSISTED, ON BASIS OF LAST TWO DAYS OF TALKS, TOTALING MORE THAN SIX HOURS WITH PRESIDENT SALIH, THAT BASIS OF COOPERATION DID REPEAT DID EXIST.

8. MUSALLIM THEN WENT INTO LENGTHY DESCRIPTION OF REASONS OF BREAKDOWN OF TALKS. TO REMARKABLE DEGREE IT PARALLELED SANA 3986. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, EMPHASIS ON SALIH'S DESIRE FOR NEW AGREEMENT TO BE SIGNED TO SIGNAL THAT YEMEN WAS WORKING ON BASIS OF SOMETHING OTHER THAN PREVIOUS AGREEMENTS WITH HAMDI. CHARGE EXPLAINED TO MUSALLIM THAT, IN AMERICAN VIEW, LARGE-SCALE CONGRESSIONAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR GRANT AID TO YEMEN WERE CERTAINLY IMPOSSIBLE. CHARGE ALSO SAID THERE WAS GOOD REASON NOT TO SEEK SUCH APPROPRIATIONS, AS MOST IMPORTANT GOAL OF AMERICAN EFFORTS IN YEMEN WAS CLOSE SAUDI/YEMENI RELATIONSHIP. SINCE SAUDIS PREPARED TO WITHDRAW THEIR EARLIER OBJECTIONS TO DIRECT U.S. ROLE, WE WERE HAPPY TO BRING AMERICAN TRAINING

TEAMS, SMALL ADVISORY MISSION FOR DIRECT CONTACT WITH YEMENIS AND FOR DIRECT IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAM BUT WE DID NOT BELIEVE IT WAS IN SAUDI OR U.S. INTERESTS TO BECOME INVOLVED OUTSIDE OF FRAMEWORK OF CLOSE CO-OPERATION WITH SAUDIS.

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9. MUSALLIM DID NOT OBJECT FORCEFULLY TO THIS VIEW BUT SAID HE THOUGHT U.S. SHOULD CONSIDER LARGER FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION OF ITS OWN TO YAR DEFENSES. THIS WOULD BE IMPORTANT EVIDENCE TO YEMENIS OF OUR BONA FIDES IN SITUATION.

10. CHARGE TOLD MUSALLIM THAT NEXT STEP SEEMED TO BE LETTER FROM KING KHALID TO USG AND USG RESPONSE TO LETTER. IN MEANTIME, EMBASSY HERE PLANS TO TRY TO SPEND QUIET RAMADAN.

11. MEETING CLOSED WITH MUSALLIM REPEATING HIS CONVICTION THAT SITUATION IN YAR IS "QUITE GOOD -- BARRING THREAT OF SALIH ASSASSINATION". SALIH IS GENUINE STRONG MAN WITH HEART IN RIGHT PLACE. IN MUSALLIM'S VIEW, DEPARTURE OF AMERICAN DELEGATION DURING ARMS TALKS HAD HAD USEFUL IMPACT ON YEMENI HOPES, AND TALKS, WHEN RENEWED, COULD PROCEED ON MORE REALISTIC BASIS. CHARGE COMMENTED THAT ANY NEXT STEPS WOULD HAVE TO BE PRECEDED BY VERY CAREFUL AND

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EXTENSIVE EFFORTS TO SELL PROGRAM HERE IN ADVANCE.  
MUSALLIM AGREED AND SAID HE EXPECTED SALIH TO MAKE  
TRIP -- QUICKLY AND SECRETLY -- TO SAUDI ARABIA. THIS  
WAS FIRST STEP IN PAVING WAY FOR NEW DELEGATION TO  
COME.  
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## Message Attributes

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